

deliberated on the various recommendations of the HLC and submitted its report to the Government. Orders on most of the issues relating to pay and allowances of the Armed Forces personnel as per the recommendations of the Group of Officers have been issued by the Government on 29.02.2000. There are, however, two issues i.e. Pay Scales of Personnel below Officer Ranks and of Lt. General and equivalent, on which the Government have yet to take a decision because of their wider implications. These issues have been referred to a group of Ministers for consideration.

Safe drinking water

*329. SHRI P. PRABHAKAR REDDY: Will the Minister of RURAL DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item captioned "UNDP report calls water bluff", published in the 'Statesman' dated the 11th July, 2000;

(b) if so, Government's reaction thereto;

(c) what steps are proposed to be taken to provide safe drinking water to the vast majority of people particularly in the rural areas; and

(d) the amount sanctioned in the Ninth Five Year Plan on this account?

THE MINISTER OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT (SHRI SUNDER LAL PATWA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Water supply is a State subject and drinking water facilities to rural habitations are provided under the State sector Minimum Needs Programme (MNP). The Central Government only supplements the efforts of the States by providing assistance under the Centrally sponsored Accelerated Rural Water Supply Programme (ARWSP). Powers have been delegated to the States to plan, sanction and implement rural water supply schemes. As per the latest

information furnished by the States, the coverage status of rural habitations with drinking water supply facilities as on 1-4-2000, is as under:

Type of coverage	Number of habitations	Percentage of total habitations covered
Total	1422664	—
Fully Covered (FC)	1172728	82.43
Partially Covered (PC)	222493	15.64
Not Covered (NC)	27443	1.93

However, the above coverage estimates will vary at any given point of time due to the following reasons:

- Increase in population/number of habitations.
- System having outlived their life span or becoming defunct due to poor maintenance.
- Sources going dry to depletion of ground waterlevel.
- Sources having become quality affected.

As regards water borne diseases the causes mentioned in the news-items are well known.

The Comptroller and Auditor General of India *vide* their Report No. 3 of 1998 (Chapter-VI) for the year ended March 31, 1997 had reviewed the implementation of National Drinking Water Mission during the period 1992—97, in all States except Madhya Pradesh observation about which is referred to in the published news-items.

Almost all the observations contained in the CAG Report were specific to various States and, therefore, action thereon was to be taken by the respective State Government. The Action Taken Report on the observations concerning each State was obtained. The reports received indicate that all the concerned States have taken remedial action in respect of most of the observations contained in the CAG Report. The Action Taken Note, based on the information thus compiled, was got vetted by the Principal Director of Audit, New

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RAJYA SABHA

Delhi and submitted to the Lok Sabha Secretariat, Public Accounts Committee (PAC) Branch on 22nd June, 1999 through the Ministry of Finance, Department of Expenditure (Monitoring Cell).

(c) Government has accorded top priority for the provision of drinking water supply facilities to all rural habitations. As per the action plans prepared by the State Governments, in consonance with this objective, all the rural habitations in the country will be provided with drinking water supply facilities in five years, subject to a availability of funds.

(d) The total Central plan outlay for Rural Water Supply Programme during the Ninth Five Year Plan is Rs. 8150.00 crores.

Trainee pilots killed in Accidents

*330. SHRI MOOLCHAND MEENA Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) the number of trainee pilots killed in accidents during the last three years;

(b) whether it is a fact that the aircrafts used for training purpose are old and Government have considered to acquire new aircrafts for this purpose; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) During the last three years, since 1997-98 till 9th August, 2000, four trainee pilots have died in accidents.

(b) and (c) The aircrafts used for initial training in Indian Air Force are operating well within the total technical life. The Mig-21 aircrafts presently being used for stage-III training of fighter pilots has been considered sub-optimal for training purposes. Therefore, it is proposed to induct Advanced Jet Trainers (AJT) in the Air Force. It is also proposed to induct Intermediate Jet Trainer (IJT) as a replacement of Kiran aircraft.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.